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A

SERMON,

Preached before his Grace

AUGUSTUS HENRY Duke of GRAFTON,

PRESIDENT,

The VICE-PRESIDENTS, the TREASURER, &c.

OF THE

HOSPITALS

FOR THE

SMALL-POX and INOCULATION,

On THURSDAY MAY, the 6th, 1773,

BY

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON.

PSALM XXXVII. Verſe 3.

Put thou thy Truſt in the Lord, and be doing Good.

GOD, ſaith Elihu in the book of Job, *acceptеth not the perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor.* And why? *His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings.* Whilſt we are gazing on the diſtinctions, which we imagine to be formed by the variety of rank and condition, there is none other in the ſight of God, than that which ariſes from the purity of our hearts, and the integrity of our conduct. How wiſe then is the leſſon of perſeverance conveyed to the righteous in my text, marking out the unerring

road to excellence! *Put thou thy truſt in the Lord, and be doing good.* How often do we hear the unequal diſtribution of riches, with their uncertain enjoyment, conſidered as a matter of complaint to one, a ſubject of joy and triumph to another? ſo fooliſh are we, and ſlow of heart to underſtand the true intereſt and concern of man, who is here in a ſtate of trial, to ſtand or fall, not by the poſſeſſion, but by the uſe which he ſhall make of the various talents he hath received. Whether they be many, or whether they be few, they are equally the means of his probation here, and will equally influence his happineſs hereafter: by their juſt application and improvement ſhall he be judged, and recompenſed according to his knowledge and practice of the duties, which belong to, and diſtinguiſh his condition. Let all then alike be mindful, no peculiarity of ſtation ſhall exempt them from a ſtrict account: the rich have duties belonging to the rich; the poor have duties belonging to the poor; the ſame important truth muſt be applied to every intermediate rank of life.

Now the hand of God is manifeſtly ſeen in this excellent conſtitution of things, the great Author is at once declared, if we conſider the effects which it produces, the general good of mankind which ariſes, and

and the happy ſtate of ſociety which reſults, in proportion as we are diſpoſed to follow the rules of moral excellence and virtue. Religious meditation will here immediately point out to us the goodneſs of God, working out its wiſe and provident ends. He hath opened to us the way to happineſs, but it is our misfortune, that we mock his direction and wander from his paths, inceſſantly complaining of our miſeries, yet ever as we complain, creating new trouble and ſorrow to ourſelves, by the blindneſs and folly of our conduct. As the weakneſs of our nature too ſtrongly inclines us to this error, it is fit that we ſhould ſometimes appeal to the conviction of our reaſon: it is fit that we ſhould ſometimes indulge the curious and inſtructive obſervation, how ſurely the effect hath followed, in proportion as the cauſe hath ſubſiſted. The hiſtory of all nations will inform us, that their virtue hath been the meaſure of their proſperity; the experience of each individual will tell him, that he hath been happy in proportion as his conduct hath been founded on the principle of conſcience, and religious obligation, which God hath given to be his guide through life. A large field is here open before us, as through every branch of morality we may purſue and prove the obſervation; but it is needleſs on this occaſion to extend our ſearch, beyond the one

important precept, Charity. If we reflect, we ſhall find that much hath already been attained, by the imperfect exerciſe of this ſingle virtue, ſo far as it hath diſplayed itſelf amongſt us.

Miſery is indeed inſeparable from the condition of mankind; numberleſs ſcenes of ſorrow and diſtreſs will ever call for our aſſiſtance; there will be many who muſt inevitably periſh amongſt us, unleſs daily compaſſion ſhall ſupply the comforts which their feeble hands are unable to procure; but the caſual produce of charity alone will yield a precarious and uncertain ſubſiſtence, when exerciſed even by the beſt amongſt us: the occaſional effuſions of bounty by the rich diſpenſed to day, and to-morrow with-held, will in frequent inſtances fail of their effect; but by the help of God, the father of the poor, this virtue hath aſſumed a kind of ſyſtem amongſt us. Many and various are the public inſtitutions by which this uncertainty is corrected, which collect the needy objects of compaſſion, and hold them up to the notice of the almſgiver; which receive the ſmaller ſtreams of bounty as they flow from the hand of individuals, and direct them in one certain channel to their purpoſe. Thus, under their various eſtabliſhments, the cries of the orphan are huſhed, the tears of the widow

dried up, and the pains of the ſick relieved; age is comforted, and youth inſtructed, and all are taught to acknowledge that piety, when maifeſted by humanity, diſplays the brighteſt charms of religion, ſerving at once to the honour of God, to the welfare and happineſs of his creatures. Thus Wiſdom is juſtified of her ways, and the inviſible providence of God is clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the peaceable fruits which are produced, according as the rule of his commands is followed. By a general call and obligation of benevolence, the happineſs of all is conſulted; by a mutual exchange of good offices, the various ranks of life contribute to the comfort and convenience of each other; the calamities of every ſituation are leſſened, and joy is infuſed into thoſe dark and dreary ſcenes which had elſe been devoted to penury and ignorance. The diſtinctions of wealth and poverty are loſt, when the genuine ſprings of happineſs are alike made acceſſible to all; and that ſuperiority removed, which is falſely imagined to ſubſiſt in ſumptuous pleaſure and parade, but which in reality is oftener found in the heartfelt ſatisfaction, and innocent mirth of the poor.

Such is the happy ſcene which charity hath produced, when exerciſed in the faith and fear of God; to this

this I may at preſent confine myſelf; yet not without obſerving, that as the practice of this virtue is one branch only in the ſyſtem of Chriſtian Morality, ſo this is but a part of the joys to be derived from that fertile ſource; virtue and goodneſs will in all caſes lead to happineſs, the ſame is the tendency of every law, of every precept which God hath commanded.

Among all the ſocial and friendly offices which Chriſtian Charity inſpires, the chief is the diſtribution of alms. In the choice of objects to be relieved, the feelings of individuals muſt direct them; for as in the variety of their feelings, in the different complexion of their virtues, a fortunate and perhaps an appointed proviſion is found for the variety of wants in man, it is difficult to ſay more by way of general precept, than that induſtry and honeſty in diſtreſs appear to make their firſt demand. Religion having eſtabliſhed the point of obligation, and opened to us the extent of our duty, reaſon and policy may direct our practice. The relief of our brethren being the object of our alms, our diligence and attention ſhould diſcover how we may beſt and moſt eſſentially relieve them.

The ſtrength and beauty of man were loſt together with his innocence. The various diſeaſes of the body, with

with the blind and irregular paſſions of the ſoul, are the melancholy proofs of his corruption. But God ſhewing mercy in the midſt of judgment, and forming the gracious covenant of our redemption, hath conſulted the relief of our temporal neceſſities, by giving us a law of benevolence and good-will. Although we all are helpleſs in ourſelves, yet by the application of our reſpective talents, we are able to comfort and aſſiſt each other; by a general concurrence in kindneſs and good offices, we may as it were break the force of God's anger in its fall, ſo equally diſtribute and ſuſtain the various evils of our nature, that though all are affected, yet none ſhall be deſtroyed. Love and charity then become the reaſonable duty of man, as they are a means of reſtoring him to life and happineſs, the invaluable forfeit of our firſt parents ſin. This ſhort review of the condition of man have I choſen as a proper introduction to the charity before us; which is calculated to relieve the unavoidable neceſſities, and inherent infirmities of our nature; and to relieve them on the principles, and according to the direction of thoſe holy ſcriptures, which in revealing the cauſe and the hiſtory of natural and moral evil in the world, have alſo revealed to us by what means we may abate, by what means we may at length overcome them.

It is to the humbler and more toilſome offices of ſociety that we owe all the neceſſaries and all the conveniencies of life. On induſtry and labour, under the bleſſing of God, depend not the ſtrength and riches alone, but the exiſtence of every nation upon earth. Let thoſe who live in eaſe and affluence remember that their duty and intereſt are the ſame; new views of happineſs, new advantages are opened as well to us, as to the poor, when we give and receive the mutual benefit of charity on our ſide, and induſtry on theirs. Sickneſs and diſorder, ſo far as they ſuſpend the labours of mankind, become a public calamity, drying up the ſprings from whence the general welfare and proſperity is drawn: throughout every rank of life they form a moſt pathetic ſcene of diſtreſs, but how much more amongſt the poor, where the daily exerciſe of the body is the ſource of their daily ſubſiſtence, amongſt whom the complaint is leſs dreaded as a diſeaſe, than as a deprivation of time, and an hindrance to their ordinary occupations and purſuits? This calamity encreaſes even to ruin in thoſe families, where every branch is neceſſary to the well-being of the other, and mutual labour is the ſupport of the whole.

If ſuch is the effect of every common diſorder among the poor, how ſevere is the ſtroke, ſhould an infectious complaint prevail; when all are ſuffering under the ſame diſtreſs, mutually lamenting the miſery of each other, and wiſhing in vain to ſupply that aſſiſtance and care which they need and require themſelves! It is not neceſſary that we ſhould ſuffer our imaginations to trace a ſcene of ſo much horror, through all its poſſible miſeries; but we muſt obſerve how loudly the voice of private humanity, concurring with that of public duty, calls upon us to prevent by every effectual means the increaſe of ſo great an evil.

This is the firſt object of the charity we are met to encourage. An Hoſpital is provided for the reception of infected patients, where, ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, they enjoy peace and quiet; ſkill and medicine conſpire to aſſwage the pains which their poverty had otherwiſe ſharpened; and all the neceſſary comforts are ſupplied, to leſſen the hardſhips to which their neceſſity had otherwiſe expoſed them. Thus the preſſing hour of danger paſt, and the fatal ſtroke ſuſpended, the ſeaſonable joys of our charity ſhall be confeſſed, throughout all the various relations of men; whether a valuable member be

ſaved to ſociety, whether a child be returned to an aged and anxious parent, or a parent be reſtored to a craving and neceſſitous family; whether a fond wife, a tender ſiſter, or an uſeful ſervant be preſerved, the bleſſing and comfort of thoſe with whom they are connected and concerned. I am ſure, that on the principles of religion, on the principles of humanity, on the principles of policy, of intereſt, and whatever other national or private conſideration ſhall be a laudable ſource of human action, I may recommend this charity to your care; which hath not only in its favour the general arguments enjoining aid and aſſiſtance to the poor, but hath with ingenuity ſhaped its relief to thoſe objects, who, by the nature of their complaint, are excluded from all other inſtitutions of this kind.

Much more might be added by way of general recommendation; but as there is a part of our plan againſt which the fears and prejudices of mankind have raiſed ſome ſpecious objections, I think we ſhall moſt effectually ſerve the inſtitution before us, if we employ a few moments in particularly conſidering the merits of this deſign; I mean the inoculation of healthy patients: a practice ſurely juſtified and defended on the ſlighteſt review of our nature and condition

dition, as I ſtated it above, in which the main ſprings of all our actions appear to be the deſire of life, the deſire of happineſs, and the neceſſity of fitting ourſelves for the various relations, for the complicated concerns and connections, by which the weakneſs of man as an individual is aſſiſted, and all the general intereſts of ſociety advanced. Shall we fly from every innocent means of bettering and improving our condition upon earth, juſt war and commerce, and every uſeful invention attended with danger in the diſcovery and exerciſe? Yet theſe we muſt renounce, if we refuſe to employ the means with which the providence of God hath bleſſed us, to advance the real comforts and rational improvements of life. If we conſider as we ought, that under his all-ſeeing care and vigilance, new ſciences and arts, new manufactures are brought forth, by which our cities are encreaſed, and great numbers are aſſembled to tranſact the buſy ſcenes; we muſt at the ſame time bleſs him for every branch of knowledge which may facilitate theſe excellent purpoſes; we may even venture to conſider inoculation with every improvement and diſcovery in medicine, as an inſtrument in his hands, as a ſpecial and ſeaſonable means of aſſiſting and carrying on his great deſigns upon us. At leaſt, we ſhould miſtruſt our own ſhort-ſightedneſs; and, conſidering

the vain propenſity of our hearts, which too often inclines us to this preſumption, we ſhould be careful that we aſcribe not to human cunning and device, what the goodneſs of God alone is working and providing for us. If the means are innocent, if they are indifferent, let us then conſider the end, whether it be conſiſtent with, or repugnant to, the uſual courſe of God's diſpenſations. This queſtion will ſoon be reſolved by the information which experience and fact ſupply; a dreadful evil hath been checked, the violence of a malignant diſtemper abated, its danger reduced, and the lives of many thouſands have been ſaved, the bleſſing and true riches of their country. Is not this an end conſiſtent with the character and attributes of God? Is it not conformable to the ſtricteſt rules of morality Is it not the firſt and common point of natural prudence, that we ſtrive, by all poſſible means, to ſecure and prolong our exiſtence upon earth? It is with an humble and devout reliance upon God that we engage in this, as in any other of the various undertakings in life; we tempt him not, we invade not his prerogative, when, ſaving the deference due to religion and morality, we employ our reaſon and judgment, the guides which he himſelf hath given us, to eſtimate the chances and probabilities of things before us; ſtill leaving the event to him who

is the ſovereign diſpenſer of all things, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life and death; ſtill reaſoning as the wiſdom of Solomon hath reaſoned, *The lot is caſt into the lap, but the whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord.*

Let us not then impute to reaſon and religion, the viſionary obſtacles which fear and prejudice have raiſed; how long did the phantom Novelty alone combat and reſiſt this practice? Our weakneſs and folly gave ſtrength to the objection, which had actually cruſhed this improvement in its infancy, had not teſtimony and proof irreſiſtibly pleaded in its favour. The danger attending this practice, is an objection equally frivolous, ſince the danger of natural contagion is infinitely greater; calculation hath already proved how few have fallen under it, where many have periſhed under the natural diſtemper, and every day's obſervation points out the miſchief and the ravage ſuſtained, in the limbs, in the ſenſes, and the general health of thoſe, whoſe lives have been reſcued and preſerved.

How unfortunate are the fears and apprehenſions of many, who have not yet paſſed this danger! ſo great, that they are in fact a diſeaſe of equal miſchief with the complaint they fear; eſpecially when ſoft-

ened and mitigated by the means which we are now ſupporting. And if there is a queſtion of morality in the caſe, the blame muſt ſurely lie on the ſide of thoſe who fly from the common lot of humanity, who relinquiſh the poſt of danger which is aſſigned them, together with their ſeveral public duties: in cowardly conſideration for themſelves alone, centering all their thoughts in the avoidance of one ſingle danger, and abandoning the good things of life which providence affords them, becauſe they are not allowed to enjoy them unſullied and unmixed with a partial and occaſional evil. Diſeaſe and health are alike the meſſengers of God, which have an eaſy acceſs into the cloſeſt retreat, and it is equally abſurd to imagine we can elude, as that we can reſiſt, his powerful diſpenſations. It is the part of man to receive with humility, to embrace with thankfulneſs, to cultivate and improve with care all the excellent means which He hath graciouſly put into our hands, to better and improve our condition upon earth. If the ſeeds of this complaint are not common to all, yet we know how few there are who can eſcape it; if then, by a voluntary ſubmiſſion, we can incur with leſs riſk the danger, which may otherwiſe ſeize us at a much greater hazard; this foreſight will be wiſe and commendable, worthy the faculties and endowments of man, and a

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manifeſt advantage ariſing from the ſuperiority of his reaſon. The proper ſeaſon of the year may be choſen, fit medicine, diet, and exerciſe may be employed, with all the various means which experience hath already proved to correct the malignity, and check the violence of this complaint. And laſtly, we may guard againſt the unhappy reflections, which muſt fill the mind of him who is actually periſhing under the natural diſtemper; will not his indiſcretion aggravate his pains, when he finds himſelf falling under the ſtroke, which with care and prudence he might eaſily have avoided? But it would carry us too far at preſent, did we purſue to their extent the many arguments by which the practice of inoculation now ſtands ſupported; I ſhall add only, as the ſum of what I have now ſaid, what I doubt not has been often ſaid on this occaſion, that it appears at once to be recommended by experience, urged and enforced by reaſon, favoured and approved by religion.

I ſhall conclude by turning your thoughts more directly to the purpoſe on which we are now aſſembled. The poor are the objects of the inſtitution before us. Let us reflect how pitiable is the diſtreſs of thoſe, who with a love of induſtry, and a ſenſe of the duties which belong to their condition, are yet

precluded from the various employments of life, by the fears which others ſhall conceive of the infection which may one day ſeize them. Willing to qualify themſelves by this eaſy trial, they are unable, by reaſon of the expence attending it. Here then is the place of their help provided, which, as the ſalutary pool of Bethesda, offers its aſſiſtance to thoſe, who can procure a friendly hand to give them their admiſſion. We are here called to the moſt pleaſing office in which our charity can be engaged, to add our ſeaſonable aſſiſtance to thoſe, who are willing to do all that they are able for themſelves; to encourage thoſe who are ſtruggling with the difficulties that oppreſs them, and who by a momentary aid may for ever be enabled to procure to themſelves the comforts from which the unhappy fears of mankind will too often exclude them, even when their own ſenſe of danger will not.

Innumerable arguments might yet be added to thoſe which I have urged, if we were minutely to enter into the various diſtreſſes of the poor, into the general terror and diſmay, with the particular calamities created thereby, throughout an extenſive neighbourhood, when once this diſorder hath opened its attack. Humanity is ſhocked to reflect, that this dan-

danger in ſome degree impends on every village, on every ſeat of manufacture and trade, on every uſeful aſſemblage of men whatever, whoſe extreme poverty, or unremitted induſtry, has prevented their timely preparation, by the eaſy method eſtabliſhed in this Hoſpital. Is an aged parent torn from his diſtracted family? Is diſtemper preying on the beauty, and waſting the ſtrength of a riſing and hopeful offspring? The hardeſt heart muſt acknowledge the melting ſcene of diſtreſs which ſhall ariſe; even they who are unacquainted with hunger and cold, who are unable to ſympathize with indigence and want, ſhall yet confeſs the feelings of nature, ſhall confeſs the ſtrength with which her attachments are formed, and the reluctance with which they are broken aſunder. All theſe things ſpeak for themſelves, if the compaſſionate are but willing to hear: one caution only is neceſſary on my part, that as it is the ſtale trick of avarice to aſſume the maſk of reaſon, ſuggeſting arguments againſt pity and compaſſion, we ſhould more than ever ſuſpect her in this caſe; leſt ſhe lurk behind the prejudices and fears of mankind, and attempt, under plauſible names, to excuſe us either to ourſelves or others, in turning from the duties of humanity. Let us obſerve, that here we have a ſuperior call and obligation; the dictates of humanity, to which of them-

ſelves we ſhould ever chearfully attend, are here ſtrengthened by the arguments of reaſon and policy; every inſtitution deſerves our care, which ſhall tend to enable or diſpoſe mankind to take their various parts in life, and to purſue thoſe profitable callings, which lead alike to the happineſs of themſelves, their family, and their country. Every inſtitution deſerves our care, which thus efficaciouſly operates to unite us all in our common intereſt, with one heart, and one mind, to diſcharge our reſpective duties, and fulfil the ſeveral relations in which we ſtand, as good citizens acting for the benefit of our community; as good men, conſulting the welfare and intereſt of our neighbours; as good ſervants of Chriſt, obeying the dictates of our Heavenly Maſter, in advancing, as far as we are able, his glory, and the happineſs of his creatures upon earth.

THE END.

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